

VZCZCXRO1234
PP RUEHIK
DE RUEHIK #0002 0211026
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211026Z JAN 09
FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0415
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 0304
RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 0458

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 000002

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC GR

SUBJECT: THESSALONIKI EMERGENCT ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: 08 THESSALONIKI 0085, 0086

¶1. Consulate General Thessaloniki's Emergency Action Committee convened in January to review all aspects of the Consulate's security after the recent violent demonstrations in Thessaloniki and throughout Greece (Reftels). The Consulate General's location in a downtown commercial building located on the street where most demonstrations are conducted makes close cooperation with local police essential to the security of the Consulate. Post asked for and usually received additional police coverage during the recent demonstrations and continues to work closely with police for post security issues.

¶2. In early January Athens Engineering Services Center (ESC) completed an upgrade to post's cameras and monitors that improves our ability to monitor events from a security standpoint, especially events on the main street in front of the consulate building where most demonstrations take place. ESC is planning an additional improvement in the near future.

¶3. Because the building is an open commercial shopping area, access up to the outside door of the Consulate is not limited. Thus the hard line door remains post's main protection against unauthorized entry into the building. To minimize the vulnerability that occurs when the door is opened, post has taken steps to minimize the occasions during which the door will be opened by placing commonly requested literature in a stand outside the door. Previously, the door was being frequently opened to hand out requested materials. Consulate staff have also been reminded to be alert when opening the hard line door for visitors and when entering and exiting.

¶4. On January 14, CG met with the Hellenic Police's Head of Security in Thessaloniki, Brigadier General Doulieris to thank the police for their support for the Consulate, including during the recent demonstrations, and to pass on some observations. The CG and Doulieris exchanged views on "lessons learned" from the demonstrations, including some possible vulnerabilities observed by Consulate staff. In particular, Consulate staff had noticed that during the riots in December the police presence guarding the rear entrance to the Consulate building sometimes dropped below usual levels. Also, shortly before one demonstration in early January, "advance" protesters managed to surprise police and prevent them from closing the protective gate blocking the main entrance to the building in which the Consulate is located. Doulieris assured the CG the level of police protection for the Consulate had not changed, and that any decrease in police presence last month had been temporary. Police would do their best, he added, to close the protective gate in advance of a demonstration near the Consulate as early as possible, without disrupting normal business of building occupants unduly. [Note: during subsequent demonstrations on

January 15 and 19, police closed the gate well before the protesters neared the Consulate, and a beefed up contingent of riot police arrived to guard the rear entrance. End note] Doulieris said he believed the worst period of demonstrations was over, and that the smaller, less-violent demonstrations would also "calm down" soon.

YEE